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ABSTRACT

The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (PL 94-142) demanded basic changes in the practices, purposes, and institutional structures of schools to accommodate handicapped students, but did not adequately address the differences between general and special educators in expectations, training, or assumptions about the functions of schooling and the role of the teacher. This study describes the nature of both the general and special education work force, beginning with reasons that educators enter the field, followed by the way in which their respective training predicts and informs their work with children in schools. General educators' work is predicated on an "industrial production" model, emphasizing strict time schedules, classroom autonomy, and crowd control. Success is measured by group norms, and the objective is to do the best for the most. Special educators, by contrast, are trained on a medical model with a focus on attention to personal needs; they measure success by individual progress relative to each student's starting point, and they depend on the support and cooperation of physicians, therapists, psychologists, and paraprofessionals. Accordingly, PL 94-142 has encountered resistance from general educators on account of perceived threats to classroom autonomy, freedom of choice, and employment security, coupled with inadequate funding and new demands on their time for implementation of the law. (TE)

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A CONVERGENCE OF TWO CULTURES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF P.L. 94-142

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A CONVERGENCE OF TWO CULTURES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF P.L. 94-142

The social, economic, political and cultural forces that influenced the passage of PL94-142 were forces external to the classrooms, forces operating on a macro level. The purpose of PL94-142 was to displace one set of ideas, practices and institutional structures with another. That is, the basic idea that the law intended to change was that the schools were intended to serve the great majority of "regular" children. Children who were not "normal" received "special" education. Special education was based on permissive legislation and seen as a charity or privilege. PL94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, intended to change the idea of privilege to right. In doing so, it demanded changes in the basic idea of the purposes of education, in the practices of education, and in the basic institutional structures of the schools.

The law required that States, in order to receive federal funds, demonstrate tha they had established and would enforce:

1. provision of full services, with an emphasis first on unserved children.
2. due process safeguards.
3. least restrictive alternative educational placements.
4. non-discriminatory testing and evaluation,
5. individualized educational plans.
6. personnel development.
7. participation of children in private schools.

These requirements were intended to have far reaching and synergistic impacts

on education, and they do. For purposes of analysis, they can be separated. The shift from privile ge to right, from exculsion to inculsion, is most directly addressed in the full service and due process sections. The replacement of one set of educational practices with another is most specifically addressed in the non-discriminatory testing and evaluation and the individualized edcuational plans sections. Changes in institutional structures are, of course, most directly affected by the least restrictive alternative placement requirement. In all areas, however, it is clear that ultimate implementation of the law, and achievement of the law's goals, depend on teachers as implementing agents. One section of the Act, personnel development, specifically recognized the need for development and training of both general and special education teachers and administrators to carry out the law. Ultimately, it was their ideas, practices and the structures of the institutions they collectively formed that would have to change.

There are two general ways of displacing one set of ideas, practices and institutional structures with another: changes in external circumstances and changes in individual behavior (Smith, 1980).. External circumstances can be changed through governmental action and/or through circumstantial coercion. PL94-142 was an example of external circumstances changing. The law itself was governmental action. It included circumstantial coercion in provisions for teacher accountability in development and implementation of the individualized educational plans and through the increased parental involvement (which can also be read as oversight). Methods of changing individual behavior include conversion, rational procedures and techniques, and behavior technologies. Efforts to date to change individual behavior on behalf of PL94-142 have concentrated on rational procedures and techniques, and the result has been

that much of the antagonism to the law has come from the very individuals charged with implementing it. The thesis of this paper is that institutionalization of PL94-142 requires attention to changing individuals, but that efforts to date have been ineffectual because they have not attended to profound differences in the sets of individuals involved, general and special educators.

This paper will describe the nature of both the general and special education work force (the individuals involved), beginning with reasons they enter the field. I will then describe their training, and how that training predicts and informs how they do their work with children in schools. Implications for the implementation of PL94-142 will be presented, and suggestions will be made for future research.

The Nature of the Workforce

Education policy, such as PL94-142, may be designed and mandated outside the education community, with little or no input from teachers. Implementation of the law, however, involves and depends on teachers directly. An analysis of the implementation potential of the law requires attention to the agents of that implementation, general and special educatiors, whose day by day actions give life or death to the aims of the law. A discussion of the nature of the workforce, of the people whose work implements or impedes the policy, must take place from two perspectives: the first that describes the characteristics that both general and special educators share and a second that analyzes ways in which general and special educators are trained to be clearly different. It is lack of attention to these differences that is a serious defect in the research to date, as well as a tragic omission in the design of the policy.

A discussion of the nature of a work force begins with expectations held by people as they make an occupational choice; moves through experiences in

in training and the assumptions that underlie that training; and concludes with the nature of the work they are called upon to do and their sources of satisfaction with that work. Put simply, we are interested in how people decide "what they want to be when they grow up"; what they have to do to get to be that; and whether they continue to want to be that, after they see what its really like.

Expectations. People who chose education as their career field do so with certain expectations of what that job/profession will be like. Because education is one of the few careers to which all children are exposed, it is fair to assume people think they know more about it than they do about many other alternatives. Early decisions to become teachers are reported by Kronus (1969) and Wright and Tuska (1968). These early decisions are usually based on identification with a single teacher or with teachers in general (Lortie, 1975). If we consider early decisions as a recruitment resource for the profession in general, we are confronted with the first split in the general ed/special ed work force. Many special education students are unlikely to have teaching open to them as a career option. We might postulate that in some kinds of handicapping conditions (for example, speech and language or hearing impaired) this phenomena would operate. However, it seems unlikely that teachers of moderately or severely handicapped students, teachers of emotionally disturbed or behaviorally disordered students; or even teachers of the learning disabled enter the profession because they, themselves, were such students and identified with their teachers. Special educators, then, in making early decisions for special education are getting into something stranger, more foreign, than are general educators.

In addition to one's own experience, expectations can be formed through the influence of significant others who were teachers. Continuity within the family is reported as a powerful recruitment resource:

> As a massive occupation marked by high turnover, teaching has thousands upon thousands of former members (particularly women) raising children, as well as vast number who still teach and raise families...the size of the occupation, therefore, provides it with a huge number of recruitment 'agents' within American life (Lortie, 1975, pp. 44-45).

That statement, made in 1975, may be less true for general education as enrollment declines, positions are cut, general economic conditions constrict, decreasing turnover. Special education, however, has seen a dramatic increase in numbers of employed professionals since 1975, and therefore there are increased numbers of special education 'recruitment agents'.

The differing numbers of available positions between general and special education is an important factor under expectations: people make career choices at least in part with the expectation that after they've finished their training (that is, their investment), they will immediately get a job (return on their investment). The employment picture for general education has changed rapidly over the last twenty years. In 1971, the supply of new graduates was 90% larger than the demand. The late 1970's showed signs of labor market adjustment to lower demand. Not until 1985, however, is the supply of newly qualified teachers expected to fall short of demand. Taken cumulatively, about 326,000 fewer teachers are expected to be hired during the next ten years than were hired in the ten years previously (NCES, 1980). Special education, however, whose personpower needs are not reported separately by NCES, has seen a massive growth in employment opportunities. At no point over the past twenty years has the supply of special education teachers come close to meeting the demand (USED, 1980, p.66). In many districts, teachers with specific certifications were recruited with bonuses.

Expectations of available jobs, therefore, are clearly different between general and special education, and these differences impact not only on entry, but on retention rates and one's sense of options and alternatives to the current position. Declining enrollments and fiscal squeezes force districts to lay-off even teachers with many years of service (the last time I was in Madison, Wisconsin, teachers with anything less than 17 years in the system got lay-off notices). Security was another expectation held by people choosing teaching as a career. The folk wisdom was not only could you always get a teaching job, once you had tenure (usually after three years of satisfactory experience), you could always keep that job. The change in this state of affairs means that general education faculty are usually older than special education faculty, that they have more experience in the system, and that they perceive themselves as having fewer options to change jobs. During the past ten years, it is only people in special education who entered training with the expectation that they could always get and always keep a job.

There are four other expectations about teaching that may influence occupational choice: status, rewards, the nature of the work, and ease of entry into the profession.

Ease of entry into the profession: Comparative data from preprofessional national examinations (SATs, Millers, GREs) all place education majors as a group, down on the bottom. Lack of intellectual ability or test taking prowess is unlikely to be a barrier for entry. Colleges of education, greatly expanded as a result of NDEA and ESEA, are allocated operating funds on the basis of student count. Schools of education, therefore, seldom have limits to the numbers of students they are willing to serve, so there is little competition for places in classrooms. Teacher training is widely available in shcools with

relatively low tuition, so that preparation to become a teacher is no more expensive than any undergraduate degree, and offers the opportunity for a return on the tuition investment immediately after graduation. Therefore, there do not appear to be intellectual, controlled access, or socioeconomic constraints to entry into the teaching profession for either general or special educators.

Nature of the work: Teachers and prospective teachers report they expected teaching to involve working with children, and they value that. This interpersonal theme applies differently to general and special education teachers.

> Unlike other major middle class occupations involving children, such as pediatric nursing ans some kinds of social work, teaching provides the opportunity to work with children who are not ill nor especially disadvantaged...it occupies a favored competitive position in that regard (Lortie, 1975, p. 27).

Clearly that is not true for teachers of special education, but the interpersonal theme remains true and Lortie's point will reappear in the later section that looks at the nature of the work as it is performed.

A second theme people expect from the nature of teaching as work is service. Service was the second most chosen response (next to working with children) in a nationwide NEA survey that asked what was important about teaching. This theme applies to both special and general educators, but we might assume is even stronger for special educators, given the long history of neglect of their charges and the adversarial pose many of them adopt toward the systems that exclude their students. In addition to service, there is a continuation theme that suggests people stay in teaching because it is a way to stay in school. A final theme on the nature of work that seems important is time compatibility (teachers work considerabl fewer days than the average American worker (Lortie, 1975).

Rewards: Expectations concerning rewards are similar for general and special education teachers, given the standardized salary scales in schools. Teaching as a profession has a relatively flat salary schedule: the increments to be gained from entry to retirement are small. The effect of this is that salaries may look handsome or adequate for recent graduates, and may be less adequate for older teachers. In addition, it may not be clear to someone outside the profession that there are no financial incentives for extraordinary effort. Nevertheless, anyone entering the profession knows the rewards are not financial. That may be, in a strange way, an incentive, for it relates to the status of the profession.

Status: Teaching occupies an odd place in the American social status system. The care and training of children is valued, and the low financial rewards reinforce the notion of service and selflessness. General and special education teachers share the ambivalent status afforded the profession.

To summarize the expectations of people considering teaching as a career: they expect they know the nature of the work; they expect they will get into training programs and then they will get jobs; they expect they'll work with children and accrue status rewards because of the service they are rendering; and finally, they expect professional autonomy and to work comparatively few days.

The section on expectations went on in detail because it sets the stage for understanding the nature of the work as it is performed. Motivation theory suggests job satisfaction is a function of the match between expectations for a job and the realities of that job (Vroom, 1964). We will see how PL94-142 changed the nature of that work, in ways contrary to expectations that people held for it, and suggest that that is a powerful potential source of problems

in implementing the law.

Training: Before we talk about the nature of teaching under PL94-142, we need to explore the nature of training that prepares people for work in schools. We have already characterized entry into training programs as unconstrained by intellectual, competitive or socioeconomic barriers. Admissions policies in undergraduate education programs are without benefit of demonstrably important criteria, although 50 years of research has been done to find such criteria (Schalock, 1981). The situation is so grim that it moved Smith to say:

> From the very beginning of pedagogical education the policy of colleges and universities has been to produce teachers to fill jobs, rather than to produce quality personnel (1980, p.39).

Therefore, Schools, Colleges and Departments of General Education, like public Elementary and Secondary schools, are based on an industrial production model. Crowd control is important, as is scheduling and time keeping. "Methods" courses are devoted, in the main, to making materials. In addition, a basic assumption is that each classroom forms a "normal distribution". The teacher-to-be will find a few smart students, a few stupid students and many students in the middle. This assumption is so ingrained, that it is used to validate teacher made tests. Much is made of the professional nature and responsibilities of the role that teachers in training are about to assume. The effect of this professionalism is to consign everyone else (especially parents) to the role of amateur. Professional affiliation is not stressed. The task of the teacher-to-be is to do as well as possible by as many children as possible.

Special education teachers-in-training, by contrast, receive training based on a medical model. This model begins with a deficit assumption that there is something importantly wrong with the child that may or may not be ultimately

remediable, Diagnoses of individuals, therefore, are crucial and the theme of the individual pervades training. Special educators expect, and are prepared to deal with, small classes, and often with other adult help. In addition, individual achievement is to be measured against the individual's past performance, not against the group. There is no assumption of statistical distribution. Rigor and structure in situations is stressed, but it is structure for an individual child (structure for the group is assumed to be unlikely). Teachers in training are encouraged to affiliate with advocacy groups and other specific, professional organizations. They are also trained to work as members of a team, sharing responsibilities for the student with providers of related services, physicians, other kinds of specialists, and parents. Parents are presumed to have important knowledge about their children, and to be allies in the educational program. The task of special education teachers-to-be is to do as well as possible by each individual child.

The Nature of the Work

First, the law places the burden of most change on general education teachers. It assumes that theirs are the attitudes, ideas, practices and institutional structures that must be changed. (An interesting study could capture the sense of loss and threat felt by special educators who liked the relative isolation, low expectations and accompanying autonomy present before the spotlight of mainstreaming or least restrictive alternative placement was thrown on them and their students (Lewis, 1977).) The attitude change that was presumed to be required, however, and the programs to support that change, was attitudes toward handicapped children, not their attitudes toward teaching (Bosold, 1981; Lapointe, 1980; Powell, 1983; Porter, 1980; Littlejohn, 1977; Naiman, 1981). Similarly, no effort appears to have been made to surface assumptions about

the teacher's role and the purposes of education from special education teachers (Stephenson, 1981; Brightman, 1981; Kelly, 1980, Porter, 1980; Carder, 1980;).

The surfacing of assumptions about the functions of schooling and the role of the teacher is essential if there is to be cooperation between the general and special educators in the development of the IEP, obviously. It should also be obvious that lack of such agreement dooms the school building to misunderstandings and delays in achieving the aims of the policy. General educators are not primarily analytic (Lortie, 1975). Special educators, because of the medical model underlying their training and the importance of handicapping categories, are. General educators assume a universalistic view, and see themselves as responsible for successive groups or classes of children. Special educators assume a particularistic point of view. General educators prepare and spend most of their professional lives isolated in classrooms. Special educators prepare and work as members of a team that may include physicians, therapists, psychologists, and paraprofessional aides. General educators assume time is on their side, in the sense that the increasing maturity and 'readiness' of the students enhances their efforts. Special educators can make no such assumptions: time is at best neutral but more likely to have negative effects as it widens the gap between what is understood as appropriate behavior and the behavior of their students. Success for the general educator is cast in terms of doing the best for the most, and in the successes of their former students. Special educators again take an individualistic view and measure success in terms of individual progress against that individual's starting point. General educators report that a goal is to induce a positive attitude toward schooling and love of a particular field of study (Lortie, 1975, p. 114). Special educators aspire to "adjustment" and "ability to function

independently." In terms of peer approval, general educators prize faculty solidarity and believe an "easy" teacher is one who lets the side down. Special educators value support and cooperation from peers, and cast discipline in terms of individual progress toward appropriate behavior. Group discipline is not the same kind of issue for them. While general educators stress control of crowds, special educators stress understanding, patience, and imaginative solutions to individual problems. An ability to respond to a wide range and variety of behaviors is valued.

The implications of these differences in the implementation of PL94-142 can be vividly extracted from careful reading of Lortie's report of what circumstances general educators think are beneficial to their work:

> ...a degree of boundedness around their classrooms...more potentially productive time with students. They depict other adults as intrusive and hindering, and they yearn for more resources as they try to influence their students (1975, p. 207).

PL94-142 was perceived to divert resources from general education to special education, giving the general educators fewer resources. It mandated closer and more frequent interactions between teachers, thereby ignoring the predisposition on the part of the general educators to see those interactions as hindering and intrusive. It required more of the general educator's time be diverted from other students. Finally, it made permeable the classroom boundaries through provision for itinerant teachers and pull-out resource room programs.

The outcome should not come as a surprise. General educators dragged their feet in cooperating with the mandates of the law. Mehan, in a recent report on "Educational Decision-Making in Student's Careers" reports:

> Practical circumstances constrain decision-making such that final placements are made in terms of available educational programs, available funds, teacher schedules, legal mandates, not just the students' "educational needs" or "disability". This practice of making placements by available category contrasts sharply with...the directives in special education guidelines (1981, Summary).
>
> ..."Disability"is also grounded in the categories that teachers bring to the interaction, including expectations for academic performance, norms for appropriate classroom conduct, organization of family and community life, and parent-child relations (1981, p. 185).

These, we see, are all areas where special educators and general educators may hold different values because the assumptions under which they were trained were different. Therefore, they will be meaning different things when they use terms to one another such as <u>appropriate</u>, <u>trying hard</u>, or <u>successful</u>, when describing students.

In addition to personal ideas and practices that seem to be alike on the surface but actually are quite different, there are institutional structures or organizational reasons that general and special educators may have difficulties working together. Recall that expectations of a job are highly related to job satisfaction (Vroom, 1964). Expectations about the nature of work have been changed by the demands of PL94-142. The rewards of working with children change as the match between the teacher's expectations and the student's behavior unravel. Many general educators may find the idea of handicapped children in their classes frightening. Others see this as an infringement on their rights to choose (When I was interviewing teachers early in the life of the law, one of them said, "If I had wanted to teach those kids, that's what I would have trained

for, but I made a choice. Now they're taking that right to choose away from me").

Employment security, the last of the material benefits, is true only for special educators currently, and cutbacks in funding may make that an expectation unmet for both general and special educators. Finally, the expectation of time compatibility is directly affected by the reporting requirements of the law. The referral, placement committee meetings, and IEP development and reviews all command time that the teachers controlled independently prior to the law. Teachers see this as a definate and personal cost to them, and a direct result of the law.

Policy Implications

PL94-142 marshalled both changes in external circumstances and changes in individual behavior in trying to meet the goal of improved education for handicapped children. Because the means to that goal involved general educators, the goal may have been stated too narrowly. Had the goal been a free and appropriate education for all children, and had attention been paid to the needs and nature of the people who were instrumental in meeting that goal, it might have been the locus of powerful and much needed educational reform. It still may have that potential. The current outcry for excellence in education, and the current examination of teacher training programs can be informed by our experience with PL 94-142. One of the major lessons from the history of that law is that to improve the schools, we must reach the teachers. Research on teachers' assumptions, expectations and their understanding of their work life is a promising place to start.

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